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ABSTRACT

To provide information concerning television and its impact on reading, a study was conducted to determine if the programing on a commercial television network would reveal a low number of positive references to reading. Programing was observed from 3:00 p. m. until 9:00 p. m. daily and from 9:00 A. M. to noon on Saturdays for a period of three weeks. Observers recorded all references to reading that occurred in the programs, along with the time of day, day of the week, name of program, initiators, and descriptions of the reference (reading for pleasure, as a functional or job related activity, or for set decoration). Initiators were categorized as man, woman, child, or group. The major findings of the study were that the majority of the references to reading were functional or job related and made for a specific purpose other than enjoyment, and that men were most often portrayed in the references, with children and groups least often represented in a reading situation. The findings imply that television might be conditioning children not to read for enjoyment. (FL)

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A CONTENTS ANALYSIS OF A COMMERCIAL TV NETWORK TO DETERMINE NEGATIVE CONDITIONING TOWARD READING ACTIVITIES

by

Sandra Stura

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Master of Arts Degree in Education at Kean College of New Jersey

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Television is potentially the greatest educational invention since printing and the establishment of schools. At its best, it goes almost anywhere in the world to find its subject matter expanding a child's boundaries. It can provide inspired performers, speakers and various experts. At its worst, the electronic "boob" tube presents questionable values and morals, provides inaccurate models, and wastes time. Whatever TV is, it has changed our lives.

Television consumes the second largest amount of time in life next to sleeping, stated Wagoner (1975). Children and teenagers are the steadiest patrons.

Ninety-six percent of American homes as of 1970, reported Cline (1972), have at least one television set. The findings of studies on the number of hours children spend watching television per week vary, but approximately three to four hours each day, seven days per week is an accepted estimate. There is no doubt that children read fewer books when television is available to them. J. Feeley (1974) in a survey of over 500 fourth and fifth graders found all subjects showed a preference for watching TV over reading content of any kind.

Parents and educators need more information about how television influences the reading behavior of

children. To teach children, educational planners have to know how children respond to television and what they have or have not learned about reading from their viewing experience.

These thoughts, and many others, were addressed in large-scale survey studies. The two best-known were a series reported by Schramm (1961) and Himmelweit (1958); these early studies agreed in finding a surprisingly little impact of television on children's lives. Scott (1956) reported contrary data; students, he found, who watched television fewer hours had consistently higher achievement scores. Although the majority of early research findings led to the conclusion that television as a medium had less disastrous effects on children than feared, it was agreed that television had become a major socializing agent.

Researchers turned to examining this socializing electronic agent. Content analysis studies were conducted of TV programming. The studies were centered around the instances of violence and anti-social behavior. Cline (1972) noted that surveyed children with a heavy television history had become so habituated to emotion-arousing events on television that their sensitivities had become blunted. Contrary data were revealed by

Fraiberg (1961), who indicated that aggressive programming yields no more aggressive behavior than nonaggressive behavior.

There is a definite relationship between television, behavior and cognitive knowledge. However, the exact impact of the nature of television on these areas has not been agreed upon. We must accept the need to continue investigations into such relationships.

Hypothesis

To provide additional evidence concerning television and its impact on reading, a study was conducted to determine if the commercial television network of NBC programming would reveal a low number of positive references to reading.

Procedures

NBC weekday programming was observed from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday programming from 9:00 a.m. to noon. References to reading in all of the programs shown were recorded to obtain: day of the week, time of day, name of program, initiators, and description of the reading references.

The initiators categories were divided into man, woman, child or group-initiated activities.

The references were divided into pleasurable, functional, and decorative.

Definitions, Assumptions, Limitations

It is important to define the following terms so that misinterpretation does not result.

Content analysis - the systematic examination of a particular television network.

Positive programming - a program whose focus is always something that affects the social life of young people, whether it be an everyday problem of growing up or a special situation or life trauma.

The time period of data-gathering spanned only a three-week period and may not be representative of the whole 13-week cycle of programming. Program viewing times were preselected as representative of those hours children would watch TV.

Since only NBC commercial television network was used in this content analysis study, a limitation on generability of the findings without supportive evidence is indicated.

Specific Procedures

The NBC TV network was viewed for a consecutive three-week period. All references to reading were

recorded.

A tabulation of data was presented in a time table format. Daily programming time slots, purpose of categories, and initiators were recorded. The purpose and initiators were tallied daily and weekly for comparisons. The weekly tally for each was then expressed as a percentage of the total. The final, or total, percent was presented on a table representation. Comparisons were made for purpose of the discussion.

The following is a key to be employed while examining the data in the tables.

References:

P pleasurable
F functional or job-related
S set decoration

Initiators:

M for man indicated
W for woman indicated
C for child indicated
M+W for group indicated

TABLE I

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 1

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Mon 11/10/80	4:00 p.m.	The Toni Tennille Show	F	reads grocery list	W
			F	reads music	W
	5:00 p.m.	Live at Five	F	reads report	M
			F	reads report	W
			S	shows book	
			S	sign	
			F	reads report	M
			F	reads map	M
	6:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads report	M
			F	reads newspaper	M
			S	books on desk	
	7:00 p.m.	Nightly News	F	reads report	M
			F	reads report	W

TABLE I (cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 1

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Mon 11/10/80	7:00 p.m.	Nightly News	F	shows paper	M
	7:30 p.m.	Family Feud	F	reads questions	M
			S	chart (audience reads)	
			F	shows chart	M
	8:00-9:00 p.m.	Little House On the Prairie	F	teacher reads composition	W
			P	reading in bed	M
			S	books on table	
			P	reads music	M
			P	reads letter	W
			F	reads business report	M
Tues 11/11/80	4:00 p.m.	The Toni Tennille Show	P	reads card	W
			F	shows book	W
	5:00 p.m.	Live At Five	F	reads report	W
			F	reads report	M
			P	read from book	M+W
			F	reads notes	W
	6:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads report	M

TABLE I (cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 1

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Tues 11/11/80	6:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads report	M
			F	reads report	M
			S	books seen on desks	
			F	reads notes	W
			P	child reading book	C
Wed 11/12/80	4:00 p.m.	NBC Special Treat	F	reads chart	W
			F	reads card	W
			S	books on shelf	
	5:00 p.m.	Live at Five	F	reads reports	M
			F	reads reports	W
			S	shows book	W
			S	desk covered with books and papers	
	6:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads reports	M
	7:00 p.m.	Nightly News	F	reads reports	W
			F	reads reports	M
Thurs 11/13/80	3:00 p.m.	Texas	F	reading report	W
			F	reading charts	W

TABLE I (cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 1

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Thurs 11/13/80	3:00 p.m.	Texas	S	books on room shelf	
			S	books on desk & in office	
	4:00 p.m.	The Toni Tennille Show	F	reads letter	W
			F	reads music	W
			F	reads music	M
	5:00 p.m.	Live At Five	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	W
			F	holds and reads sign	W
			P	reads selection from book	W
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads chart	M
	6:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	W
			S	library	
	7:00 p.m.	Nightly News	F	reads notes	M
			S	library	

TABLE I (cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 1

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Thurs 11/13/80	7:00 p.m.	Nightly News	F	reading magazine	M
	7:30 p.m.	Family Feud	F	reads questions	M
			S	audience response on chart	
			F	shows chart	M
	8:00-9:30 p.m.	Movie: The Godfather	F	audience silently read story introduction	M+W *
			F	Subtitles, read by audience 45 min.	M+W
			F	reads ticket	M
Fri 11/14/80	1:00 p.m.	Days of Our Lives	F	reads booklet	M
	2:00-3:00 p.m.	Another World	F	reads book	W
			P	reads book	W
			F	refers to notes	M
	6:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads credits	
			S	books on shelves	

*silently

TABLE I (cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 1

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Fri 11/14/80	7:00 p.m.	Nightly News	F	reads notes	M
			F	audience silently reads upcoming events written on chart	M+W
	7:30 p.m.	Family Feud	F	reads questions	M
			S	audience response on chart	
			F	shows chart	M
	8:00-9:00 p.m.	NBC Special Superstars of Magic	F	audience silently reads upcoming events	M+W

As can be seen from Table I, the 85 references consisted of 8 pleasurable, 61 functional and 16 set decorations. The models for children were in the minority, 1 child out of 85 models. Surprisingly, men and women initiators were quite close in number.

END OF WEEKDAY VIEWING - TABLE I - TALLY

22 hrs. viewed	85 references	8 pleasurable	38 man
		61 functional	26 woman
		16 set decoration	1 child
			5 group

TABLE II

PRESENTATION OF WEEKEND
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 1

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Sat 11/15/81	7:00 a.m.	Knowledge Backstage Chicago	F	reads reports	M
	7:30 a.m.	Sonaria's	S	sign	
	8:00-9:00 a.m.	Godzilla/ Dynomutt Show	S	sign	
	3:00 p.m.	NFL Review and Preview	F	points to scoreboard	M
	4:00 p.m.	Sportsworld	F	reads notes	M
			S	scoreboard	
			S	shows newspaper article	
			S	bowling scores	
	5:30-6:00 p.m.	Mary Tyler Moore Show	P	reading book	W
			P	reading book	M
			S	books in living room	
Sun 11/16/80	12:30-1:30	Special: The Jews of Hungary	P	reads book	M
			F	points to chart and reads	M
			S	books in room	
			S	library	
			P	points to enjoyable pages in book	M

TABLE II (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKEND
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 1

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Sun 11/16/80	12:30-1:30	Special: The Jews of Hungary	F	points to documents	W
			P	reads pages from book	M
			F	shows billboards	M
			F	reads letter	W
			P	recite and read poem	C
			F	(4) read Bibles	M+W
	1:30-3:30 p.m.	Movie: Any Wednesday	F	starring character names	M+W*
			P	reads magazine	W
			S	books in room	
			P	reads book	W
	3:30 p.m.	NFL 80	F	reads notes	M
			F	caption reading	M+W*
			F	points and reads map	M
			F	reads letter from fans	M
	4:00-6:00 p.m.	NFL Football	F	man reads report	M
			S	scoreboard	

*silently

TABLE II (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKEND
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 1

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Sun 11/16/80	4:00-6:00 p.m.	NFL Football	F	reads report	M
	4:30 p.m.	News	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	W

The majority of the references as shown in Table II for weekend viewing were functional. Only one model for demonstrating reading as pleasurable activity was noted. Women were also under-represented; only six references were woman-initiated.

END OF WEEKEND VIEWING - TABLE II - TALLY

11½ hrs. viewed	35 references	8 pleasurable 17 functional 10 set decoration	15 man 6 woman 1 child 3 group

TABLE III

WEEK ONE TALLY

33½ hrs. viewed	120 references	16 pleasurable 78 functional 26 set decoration	53 man 32 woman 2 child 8 group

Week one tally suggests most references to reading are functional (78 out of 42) and man-initiated.

TABLE IV

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY PROGRAM INFORMATION WEEK 2

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Mon 11/17/80	4:00 p.m.	The Toni Tennille Show	F	reads notes	W
			F	reads music	M
			F	reads music	W
	5:00 p.m.	Live At Five	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	W
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads from book	W
			F	presents book to newsman	W
	6:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	W
	7:00 p.m.	Nightly News	F	reads notes	M
			S	signs	
	7:30 p.m.	Family Feud	F	reads questions	M

TABLE IV (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 2

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Mon. 11/17/80	7:30 p.m.	Family Feud	S	audience response on chart	
			F	shows chart	M
	8:00-9:00 p.m.	Little House on the Prairie	S	words on blackboard	
			P	reads letter	C
			P	reads letter	W
			P	reads letter	C
			S	books in classroom	
			P	reads letter	C
			S	acting credits	
Tues 11/18/80	4:00 p.m.	The Toni Tennille Show	F	reads notes	W
			F	reads music	W
	5:00 p.m.	Live At Five	P	shows magazine	W
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	W
			F	reads notes	M
			S	shows books on table	
			F	reads notes	M

TABLE IV (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 2

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Tues 11/18/80	6:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
			S	books on shelves	
			S	signs, needed to be read by audience	
			P	reads letter	M
Wed 11/19/80	4:00 p.m.	The Toni Tennille Show	F	reads music	W
	5:00 p.m.	Live At Five	F	reads notes	W
			F	reads notes	W
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
	6:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
			S	books on shelf	
	7:00 p.m.	Nightly News	F	reads various news reports	6(M)
	8:00-9:00 p.m.	Real People	P	read letters	M
			P	read letters	W
			S	signs on walls	

TABLE IV (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 2

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Wed 11/19/80	8:00-9:00 p.m.	Real People	S	names on shirts	
			F	audience and cast read letters	M+W
Thurs 11/20/80	4:00 p.m.	The Toni Tennille Show	F	reads notes	W
			F	reads music	W
			F	reads letter	W
	5:00 p.m.	Live At Five	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	W
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	W
	6:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
			S	desk with books & papers	
			F	shows written reviews	M
	7:00 p.m.	Nightly News	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads letter	M

TABLE IV (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 2

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Thurs 11/20/80	7:30 p.m.	Family Feud	F	reads questions	M
			S	audience response on chart	
			F	shows chart	M
	8:00 p.m.	Special: Daffy Duck's Thanks-For-Giving	P	duck reads card	M
			F	newspaper ad	M
			F	monster reading addresses	M
	8:30-9:00 p.m.	Special: Bernstein Bears Meet Big Paw	F	animals read signs	M+W
Fri 11/21/80	4:00 p.m.	The Toni Tennille Show	F	reads music	W
	5:00 p.m.	Live At Five	F	reads notes	W
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
			S	maps	
			F	reads charts	W
	6:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads report	M
			F	reads report	M
			S	chart	

TABLE IV (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 2

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Fri 11/21/80	7:00 p.m.	Nightly News	F	reads report	M
			F	read report	W
			F	read report	M
	7:30 p.m.	Family Feud	F	reads questions	M
			S	audience response on chart	
			F	shows chart	M
	8:00-10:00 p.m.	Special: Daredevils	S	signs	

Table IV shows that most of this weekday viewing was primarily male-initiated and functional.

END OF WEEKDAY VIEWING - TABLE IV - TALLY

21½ hrs.	95 references	9 pleasurable	49 men
		69 functional	24 woman
		17 set decoration	3 child
			2 group

Three daily news programs consume a large segment of child viewing hours: Live At Five, 5-6 p.m.; News 4 N.Y., 6-7 p.m.; Nightly News 7-7:30 p.m. These programs (employing Table IV data) present

women in the minority (13 female initiators to 38 males) and, further, no child models were seen during the entire week time slot of 5-7:30 p.m.

TABLE V

PRESENTATION OF WEEKEND PROGRAM INFORMATION WEEK 2

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Sat 11/22/80	8:00 a.m.	Godzilla Hong Kong Phooey	S	shows library	
			S	signs	
			F	dog reads letters	M
			P	reads letter	W
	9:00 a.m.	Flintstone Comedy Show	S	signs	
			P	reads letter	W
			F	reads music	M
	10:30 a.m.	Daffy Duck	S	billboards	
			S	papers on desk	
			F	duck reads street sign	M
			F	duck reads report	M
	11:00-12:00 p.m.	Batman and Super 7	F	reads dial names	M
			S	museum with books	
			P	reading magazine	W

TABLE V (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKEND
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 2

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Sun 11/23/80	10:30 a.m.	The Prime of Your Life	S	library in background	
			F	parallel reading audience & announcer	M+W
			F	reads synopsis	M
			F	captions about people, to be read by audience	M+W
	11:00 a.m.	Visions: Argentina	F	audience reads subtitles of conversation for 15 min.	M+W
			F	signs	M+W
	11:30 a.m.	News Forum	F	reads notes	M
	12:00 p.m.	Meet the Press	F	refers to notes	M
			F	refers to notes	W
			F	refers to notes	M
			F	names under characters	M+W*
			P	shows letter, reads section	M
	12:30 p.m.	NFL Today	S	shows desk with books	

*silently

TABLE V (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKEND
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 2

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Sun 11/23/80	12:30 p.m.	NFL Today	F	checks notes	M
			F	- scoreboard	M+W*
	1:00-3:00 p.m.	NFL Football	S	signs	
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads credits	M
			F	reads credits	M

*silently

END OF WEEKEND VIEWING - TABLE V - TALLY

8½ hrs. viewed	32 references	4 pleasurable	13 man
		19 functional	4 woman
		9 set decoration	0 child
			6 group

This tally supports the previous weekend finding (Table II) that most references are functional. During the first weekend one child was observed reading on one program within 11½ hours of viewing; in the second weekend no children were observed reading. In Table II the data indicated that there were 6 women initiators compared to 14 male. Table V shows 4 women initiators compared to 13 male. Each weekend viewing demonstrated woman are underrepresented.

Week two tally suggests references to reading are functional (83 out of 39) and man-initiated. This finding coincides with week one's tally. More set decoration references appear weekly than pleasurable references. There is little or no demonstration of reading as a pleasurable, recreational activity.

TABLE VI

WEEK TWO TALLY

30 hrs. viewed	127 references	13 pleasurable	62 man
		88 functional	28 woman
		26 set decoration	3 child
			8 group

TABLE VII

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORAMATION
WEEK 3

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Mon 11/24/80	4:00 p.m.	The Toni Tennille Show	no references		
	5:00 p.m.	Live At Five	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	W
			F	reads notes	W
	6:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
			F	map reading	M

TABLE VII (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 3

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Mon 11/24/80	7:00 p.m.	Nightly News	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
	7:30 p.m.	Family Feud	F	reads questions	M
			S	audience response to chart	
			F	shows chart	M
	8:00 p.m.	Little House on the Prairie	P	reads book	M
			P	reads menu	M
			P	reads menu	W
			P	reads chart	M
Tues 11/25/80	4:00 p.m.	The Toni Tennille Show	P	reads letter	W
			F	reads box labels	M
	5:00 p.m.	Live At Five	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	W
			F	reads notes	W
			F	reads notes	M
	6:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
	7:00 p.m.	Nightly News	S	desk with books	
			F	reads notes	M

TABLE VII (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 3

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Tues 11/25/80	7:30-8:00 p.m.	Family Feud	F	reads questions	M
			S	audience reads chart	
			F	shows chart	M
			F	reads question	W
Wed 11/26/80	1:00 p.m.	Days of Our Lives	S	books in library	
			P	reads menu	W
			F	reads chart	M
	2:00-3:00 p.m.	Another World	S	office books on shelf	
			S	magazines on table	
			P	reading magazine	W
	4:00 p.m.	The Toni Tennille Show	no references		
	5:00 p.m.	Live At Five	F	reads notes	W
			F	reads notes	W
			F	reads notes	M
	6:00-7:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads notes	M
			P	reads letter	M

TABLE VII (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 3

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Thurs 11/27/80	9:00-11:00 a.m.	Parade	S	signs on floats	
			F	award winning float signs	M+W*
	4:00-6:00 p.m.	Football	S	signs in stadium	
			F	man reads notes	M+W*
			S	scoreboard	
Fri 11/28/80	2:00 p.m.	Another World	S	books on shelf	
			S	magazines on table	
			F	reading charts	W
	3:00 p.m.	Texas	S	names on gravestones	
			S	magazines on table	
			F	reading letter	M
	4:00 p.m.	The Toni Tennille Show	S	book on table	
			F	reads music	M+W
	5:00 p.m.	Live At Five	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	W
			F	reads notes	W
			F	reads notes	M

*silently

TABLE VII (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKDAY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 3

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Fri 11/28/80	6:00-7:00 p.m.	News 4 N.Y.	F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads chart	M

The weekday programming tally in Table VII supports the generalization that most references are functional and man-initated.

END OF WEEKDAY VIEWING - TABLE VII - TALLY

22 hrs. viewed	60 references	8 pleasurable	29 man
		38 functional	13 woman
		14 set decoration	0 child
			3 group

The weekday references, 60 as noted in Table VII, were fewer than the previous week's findings. This may be attributed to the change in programming format. The holiday (Thanksgiving, Nov. 26) demanded "special" programming, all presenting fewer reading references.

TABLE VIII

PRESENTATION OF WEEKEND
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 3

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Sat 11/29/80	8:00 a.m.	Godzilla/ Hong Kong Phooey Show	F	male dog reads book	M
			F	story titles	M+W*
	9:00 a.m.	Flintstone Comedy Show	S	story titles	
			F	audience reads label on box	M+W*
			S	signs	
			F	story titles	M+W*
	10:30 a.m.	Daffy Duck Show	F	duck reads credentials	M
			F	read story titles	M+W*
Sat 11/29/80	11:00 a.m.	Batman/ Super 7	F	read computer	M
			F	read computer buttons	M
			S	signs on roadway	
Sun 11/30/80	3:00 p.m.	Super Bowl XIV Highlights	S	scoreboard	
			F	refers to notes	M
	3:30 p.m.	NFL '80	S	scoreboard	
			F	refers to notes	M

*silently

TABLE VIII (Cont.)

PRESENTATION OF WEEKEND
PROGRAM INFORMATION
WEEK 3

Day/Date	Time	Show	Reference	Purpose	Initiator
Sun 11/30/80	3:30 p.m.	NFL '80	F	refers to chart	M
	4:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Football	S	scoreboard	
			S	signs	
			F	reads notes	M
			F	reads notes	W

As can be seen by Table VIII, there were no pleasurable references to reading made during this second weekend of viewing.

END OF WEEKEND VIEWING - TABLE VIII - TALLY

7 hrs. viewed	21 references	0 pleasurable	8 man
		13 functional	1 woman
		7 set decoration	0 child
			4 group

This is the first weekend of study when no positive, pleasurable models were initated. Children and women were also underrepresented. Overall, the references show reading as a functional activity, but clearly done only where necessary and primarily by males.

The third week's results are concurrent with past findings; the majority of the references were functional or job-related and done for a specific purpose rather than enjoyment, and men were most portrayed in the references. Children were portrayed the least amount of time.

TABLE IX

WEEK THREE TALLY

29 hrs. viewed	80 references	8 pleasurable	37 man
		51 functional	14 woman
		21 set decoration	0 child
			7 group

Table X demonstrates that the reference purpose as well as the initiators followed a consistent pattern.

TABLE X

TOTAL REFERENCE PURPOSE AND INITIATORS

	Purposes			Initiators			
	Pleasurable	Functional	Decoration	Man	Woman	Child	Group
Week 1	16 13%	78 65%	26 22%	53 56%	32 34%	2 2%	8 8%
Week 2	13 10%	88 69%	26 21%	62 61.3%	28 27.7%	3 2.9%	8 7.9%
Week 3	8 10%	51 64%	21 26%	37 63%	14 24%	0 0%	7 12%
Total	37 11%	217 67%	73 22%	152 60%	74 29%	5 2%	23 9%

Table X shows further that a majority, 67% of the references, were of the functional or job-related nature. Reading was shown to be an essential skill for facilitating a multitude of day-to-day tasks; yet these tasks may not have been undertaken if not required. Reading was not promoted as a means of recreation; only 11% of the references were pleasurable. As shown on Table IX, it was fashionable to decorate a set with books since 22% of the references were of the set decoration type.

Certainly, no positive reading environment for children to model was presented. Only 2% of the reading activites were stimulated by children. Men dominated with 60% of the initiated activities; women were a poor second with 29%.

SUMMARY

The major findings were as follows: the majority of the references were functional or job-related and done for a specific purpose rather than for enjoyment; men were most often portrayed in the references, and women and children were portrayed the least amount of time.

A comparison with the research project of J. Winters (1980) is needed, for this research project replicated the study by Winters. The intent of this study was to verify conclusions and extend the validity of the previous findings. The Winters project examined ABC programming.

Table XI shows that the study findings were surprisingly similar. Most references were functional and man-initiated.

TABLE XI

A COMPARISON OF TOTAL REFERENCE PURPOSE AND INITIATORS

	Purposes			Initiators			
	Pleasurable	Functional	Decoration	Man	Woman	Child	Group
NBC	11%	67%	22%	60%	29%	2%	9%
ABC	19%	66%	15%	64%	24%	7%	5%

Both networks portrayed children and group initiators the least amount of time. A majority of the references were functional or job-related and done for a specific purpose rather than for enjoyment.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study support the acceptance of the hypothesis of the study that a content analysis would show a low number of positive references to reading and that it would reveal a low number of positive, pleasurable references for children's reading activities. An additional conclusion which appears warranted is that TV is conditioning people, particularly children, not to read for pleasure.

The study findings verify the prior research by J. Winters. Both investigations found television did not provide a positive role model for children reading.

The World Book Encyclopedia (1979) explains that television comes from the Greek word tele meaning far, and the Latin word videre meaning to see. Thus, television means to see far. Television, indeed, extends visual and audible experiences. Some claim by bringing the entire world's experiences into the living room, television has begun to teach beginning concepts, sharpened visual perceptions, encouraged creativity and awakened an interest in literature. Certainly, television appears to have the potential for great good in our lives.

Others argue the power of television is awesome. It is perceived as a villain. They describe its impact on aggressive behavior, decreased reading scores, and lack of attention and enthusiasm in school. For many television has become a scapegoat for almost every adult's anxiety about what's happening to children.

The interrelationship of children's skills and habits and television viewing is complex. As might be expected, contradictory judgements are being made about its influence. All agree children watch TV, react to it, learn from it, and are changed by it.

Television as we know it today was not developed until the 1920's, and had little importance in communication until the 1940's. But during one 10-year period--

the 1950's--it became part of most households in the United States. The United States became a nation of television viewers. Nancy Larrick (1978) states that in the 1950's only a million households in the United States had television. By 1977, 73 million had a least one set; 45 percent of those had more than one. Every set had an off button, but apparently Americans were using it less and less.

Television, compared to family, church or school, has been getting equal or more than equal time from most children. Teachers and parents are stepping aside for TV, finds Huston-Stein (1979). Consider the growth of the medium: in 1967, second graders watched 16 hours a week, reported Larrick (1978). In 1977, children two to eleven years of age watched 25 hours and 38 minutes a week. The average American child watches 5,000 hours of television before entering first grade.

Thrity years ago, with the advent of television, parents and teachers found the medium potent competition for attention of their respective children. Little did anyone realize how powerful and time-consuming television would become.

Early researchers were concerned with the effects of television as a medium on the lives of children and

families. What activities were abandoned in favor of television viewing? Did television interfere with school work?

Some of the first research was done on the impact of television on reading and/or school achievement. Clark (1951) in a survey of almost a thousand children in the sixth and seventh grades of sixteen public and parochial schools correlated children's mental age, achievement in school subjects, and television viewing hours. He reported that in comparing the achievement of televiewing with that of non-televiewing, the study revealed no significant differences. This finding was supported by Ridder (1963). In a study of children in grades three through six, Witty (1951) found that intellgience was unrelated to the amount of time spent watching television. Greenstein (1954) found evidence of sixth grade students who owned a television consistently achieved higher in school than those who did not own a television set. Schramm (1961) and Himmelweit (1958) agreed, elementary school children with the highest marks in school were also the heaviest TV watchers.

Contrary findings were reported by Mahoney (1953) and Scott (1954); both reported television acted as a negative instrument. Those who watched fewer hours had

consistently higher achievement scores.

All of these early studies yielded satisfactory but uncertain results of the impact of television on our children's lives. It was nevertheless clear television had become an integral part of the family. Families spent slightly more time together with television than without, though some of that time was spent watching TV together. Television became a very time-consuming agent. Maccoby (1951) revealed one and a half hours a day shifted from active play to passive viewing. In the 1950's, we were just beginning to experience TV interference. Consider the reports of Chamberlin and Chambers (1976), who indicated that sixty percent of families have changed their sleeping patterns, fifty-five have altered meal times because of TV, and seventy-eight use TV as an electronic babysitter. Johnson (1967) reported engineers in large metropolitan areas have even had to redesign city water systems to accommodate the drop in water pressure caused by heavy lavatory use during prime-time commercials. How did television become such a time-consuming medium?

Attention in the 1960's turned to an examination of what this powerful socializing agent was teaching. Research shifted from the medium itself to the content of the programs presented.

Today's children often have difficulty relating to reality. The land of television in which major problems arise, unfold, and get solved in twenty-five or thirty minutes, states Herndon (1980), is a fantasy land. Their sense of reality is distorted and they are likely to become callous about death and suffering. The relation between overt aggression and television habits has been demonstrated in a survey study by Cline (1972), who contends that the average child between ages of five and fifteen will witness on television the violent destruction of more than 13,400 fellow human beings. Eron (1972) found a highly significant relationship between boys' preferences for violent television programs in the third grade and both their peer-rated aggression and self-ratings of antisocial behavior in the 13th grade. Stein and Friedrich (1975) support this belief; they found boys more likely to show behavioral learnings from TV than girls. These findings of a direct positive relationship between the viewing of TV violence and aggressive behavior on the part of the viewer is collaborated by Mukerji (1976) and Bandura (1963).

The Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior (1972) served as a virtual finale to research on television violence. The committee

concluded that television violence was causally related to aggressive behavior, then qualified their conclusions to say that the instigating effects of violence occurred primarily for children who were already somewhat aggressive.

The conclusion emerged clearly that television violence instigates aggressive behavior, though some disagree on the magnitudes of these effects. We simply do not have the answers to some of the most important questions.

The 1970's brought an expansion of topics in television research as well as a general increase in media research. Researchers began to examine the potentially negative influences of TV. Attention turned to advertising, social stereotypes, and educational content. Much impetus for research stemmed from citizens' groups, such as Action for Children's Television and Council for Children.

Negative educational influences of television were discussed by Michael Morgan (1980), who found students who are heavy viewers of TV tend to read more but comprehend less than light viewers. Zuckerman, Singer and Singer (1980) indicated that it is the types of programs that children watch that are important even if the child

is a relatively light viewer. They feel children's increased television viewing may be causing school-related problems. Hornik (1978) blames this increased viewing for displacing reading. Children have little time for reading and less incentive.

Some researchers have found television programming to be encouraging reading development. Starkey and Swinford (1974), Adams and Harrison (1975) determined that regardless of specific research designs, the relationships of the amount of television viewed and reading achievement in schools was not significant. Starkey (1974) found regardless of mental ability, people retain better facts which they see. Smith (1976) substantiates Starkey with experimental findings of preschool children and television commercials. It is reported that many children who learn to read before they enter school do so because of the print in commercials. The fact that printed words in television commercials were teaching preschool children to read was a significant reason for the development of the Sesame Street and Electric Company format.

Futterman (1979) describes Sesame Street as a proponent of short segments teaching information. The children digest the information and see it again as it is

repeated throughout the year. Nancy Larrick (1978) argues, to the child who is a TV fan, the act of reading becomes deadly. The strain of trying to wall off high speed TV-viewing skills in order to move slowly and thoughtfully is frustrating to many children. Zuckerman, Singer and Singer (1980) support Larrick and show evidence that television viewing is enhancing a strong preference for reliance upon global visual representations. As a result, they found, children, later adults, will probably be less patient at making the effort required to process auditory verbal material, or to deal with reading material. Obviously, television appears to be a major new factor in the human environment and its impact upon us deserves serious attention. Teachers and parents must begin to seek a more rational and informed usage of this medium.

Utilizing the interest in TV and reading, the Television Reading Program (TVRP) as it is called, helped establish a reading program for children in grades three to twelve using TV scripts. Its thrust, stressed McAndrew (1978), was to try to reach children who have had little interest in reading, limited vocabularies and few comprehension skills. To ignore television scripts as a means to reading is to ignore an opportunity to help

children move into the world of the printed word. Script reading helps learn vocabulary and speech patterns. It appears, perhaps, that TV script reading can provide an active learning experience. This is only one option; hopefully more research will provide more avenues for effective usage of the TV.

To recapitulate and conclude: The 1950's showed a concern with effects of television as a medium on lives of children and families, the 1960's a concern for content of socializing agent, and the 1970's a concern for potentially negative influences of TV, and possibly its potential.

Television's phenomenal potential lies in the fact that more people can have instantaneous access to the same event or experience than ever before. It teaches children about the world and social values with an immediacy that parents and teachers cannot duplicate. We must learn to be critical of TV and use it judiciously. For it is more than a communication for entertaining.

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